[English]

Production and Exploration of Coal

5446. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to set up a single window independent body to clear proposals for coal exploration and production;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to protect the work undertaken by the public sector companies and also by the Geological Survey of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) to (c) The Government have decided, subject to legislative changes, to set up an independent body to monitor detailed and regional exploration of coal and lignite blocks and also to allot new coal blocks to Indian Companies in the Public & Private Sector for coal mining on the basis of competitive bidding.

[Translation]

Irregularities in Importing Gold by STC

5447. SHRI PAWAN DIWAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any complaints regarding irregularities and violations of the prescribed directions and procedures for import of Gold by State Trading Corporation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken or being taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to check such irregularities in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

[English]

Recognition to Private Coal Mines

5448. SHRI SUNIL KHAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private collieries like Gopal Krishna and Jay Guru of P.S. Saltore in West Bengal are running ley the order of the Calcutta High Court;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to recognise the private collieries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The private mine Gopal Krishna was reportedly being run by the order of the High Court of Calcutta. However, Government is not aware of running of any Joy Guru Colliery under the order of any Court of law.

(b) The owner of Gopal Krishna Colliery was running the colliery under certain conditions by an order of the High Court of Calcutta passed in September'96 to this effect. However Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (ECL) was not made a party to the case. When it came to the notice of ECL, it filed various applications before the division bench of the High Court praying for its impleadment in the appeal filed by the West Bengal Government against the order of the High Court passed in September'96. It also prayed for a stay on the operation of the colliery by the owner. The division bench, hearing the petition of ECL, passed an interm order to stop mining in Gopal Krishna Colliery. These applications have now been taken up by the Hon'ble Court for regular hearing.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. As per the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 as amended in 1976, all the leases for mining of coal, held by the private parties except for those engaged in iron and steel production, were terminated. Subsequently by an amendment made to the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in June, 1993, coal mining to private companies have been allowed only for power generation and washing of coal obtained from a mine in addition to the continuing provisions for iron and steel production. Cement production has also been notified as an end use for the purpose. The above statutory position is still continuing.

[Translation]

Export of Edible Oil

5449. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to export edible oils during the current financial year;

(b) whether all varieties of edible oil have been included in the proposal;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the details of the edible oil which have not been considered in the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) The export projections for the Ninth Five Year Plan including the year 1997-98 have not been formulated. The exports of edible oils will depend upon the varieties, traded, prices, consumer preferences and International demand and supply position.

(b) to (d) As per the current Export-Import Policy, export of edible oils is as follows: